

Neighbors foil assault attempt on woman

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~~ASSAULT~~ neighbors.

OAKLAND — After attacking a woman, an ex-convict turned meek as a lamb Saturday morning as half a dozen Glenview residents surrounded him after hearing the victim's screams.

The woman was not hurt, witnesses said, and the bewildered parolee soon realized he was messing with a neighborhood fed up with being on the edge after being terrorized by a serial rapist this winter.

"We're all on pins and needles, we can't take much more," said Glenview resident Gary Groves, who confronted the suspect on La Cresta Avenue with a stick. "We can't even feel safe in broad daylight."

Oakland police booked the parolee, Wilfred Allen, on suspicion of assault to commit rape. He is being held at Oakland city jail on \$54,500 bail.

In January, police arrested rape suspect Oliver James Evans Jr., 26, on suspicion he stalked the Glenview and Dimond districts.

The victim in Saturday's attack escaped without injury, but was badly shaken. The woman was heading home in jogging clothes from her morning Tai-chi exercise in Dimond Park when the suspect lunged at her outside Glenview Elementary School on La Cresta Avenue, witnesses said.

She fought back the attacker's grasp and screamed, attracting the attention of Groves and six other

"Her eyes were big, her hands were over her face and she was petrified," said Groves, a 45-year-old city housing inspector.

Ben Strunwasser, block captain for the Neighborhood Watch group on Hampel Street, took the terrified woman away. "She was really freaked," he said.

While Groves' girlfriend called police, he grabbed a three-foot broken wooden shovel handle and found Allen cowering on the street corner.

Groves flagged down a passing Ford sedan. The driver, along with a passenger, cut off the suspect by parking in front of him. They then calmly drank their coffee. "It was almost as if they were watching a show," Groves said.

The suspect dropped his jacket and newspapers and meekly said: "Do what you gotta do."

"It was almost as though he wanted to go back inside (to prison)," Groves said. "I couldn't figure out why he didn't put up a fight."

Although police arrived promptly, the wait seemed like an eternity to Groves, who stood guard over the suspect.

Groves hopes his move to thwart another assault in the Glenview District pays off some day.

"I hope someone will help me if I'm ever assaulted," Groves said. "We neighbors have to stick together."